

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2458
USDOC WASHDC
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12359

LENINGRAD FOR DR. SLATER

E.O.11652:GDS
TAGS: ECEM, ENRG, CA, UR, US
SUBJECT: SOVIETS REPORT CANADIAN INTEREST IN "TRILATERAL"
NATURAL GAS PROJECT

SUMMARY: DURING INFORMAL MEETING WITH US OFFICIALS USA/
CANADA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV MENTIONED CANADIAN
INTEREST IN A TRILATERAL NATURAL GAS PROJECT INVOLVING
THE U.S. AND THE USSR. HE THOUGHT CANADIANS WOULD BE
APPROACHING U.S. ABOUT PROJECT, IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY
DONE SO. ARBATOV'S DEPUTY, SHERSHNEV, DESCRIBED THIS
PROJECT AS INVOLVING DEVELOPMENT FOR CANADIAN MARKET OF
ALLEGED ON-SHORE NATURAL GAS FIELD IN SOVIET TERRITORY
ADJACENT TO ALASKA. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MAY 30 CALL BY DR. COURTNEY SLATER, CHIEF
ECONOMIST OF THE USDOC, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBASSY E/C
COUNSELOR, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF THE USA
AND CANADA ARBATOV MENTIONED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD ON
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RECENT VISIT TO CANADA OF CANADIAN INTEREST IN TRILATERAL
NATURAL GAS PROJECT. ARBATOV DID NOT DESCRIBE THE PROJECT,
WHICH HE SAID MIGHT NOT YET BE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, BUT HE
EXPRESSED EXPECTATION THAT CANADIANS WOULD BE APPROACHING
USG ABOUT IT IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO.

2. ON MAY 31, DR. SLATER AND COUNSELOR TOOK UP THEME AT

LUNCHEON WITH USA/CANADA INSTITUTE DEPUTY DIRECTOR
SHERSHNEV, WHO HAD BEEN PRESENT AT DISCUSSION WITH ARBATOV
THE PREVIOUS DAY. SHERSHNEV STATED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF
THE PROJECT AS CANADIAN INTEREST IN EXPLOITING, TOGETHER
WITH U.S. FIRMS, SOVIET NATURAL GAS DEPOSITS LYING ADJACENT
TO ALASKA. HE IDENTIFIED THESE DEPOSITS AS ON-SHORE. THE
GAS WOULD BE DESTINED FOR CANADIAN AND PERHAPS U.S.
MARKETS, ACCORDING TO SHERSHNEV.

3. COMMENT: WE REPORT THESE COMMENTS BY ARBATOV AND
SHERSHNEV AS GIVEN TO US, IMPLAUSIBLE AS THEY MAY APPEAR.
ALTHOUGH WRANGEL ISLAND, THE EASTERN-MOST OF THE NEW
SIBERIAN ISLANDS, THE EAST SIBERIAN SEA AND THE ADJACENT
LAND MASS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS "PETROLEUM AREAS," WE
KNOW OF NO KNOWN "ON-SHORE" GAS RESERVES ON THE
CHUKHOTSKIY PENINSULA OR THE OTHER MAINLAND AREAS
IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO ALASKA. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED
IN HEARING IF THE DEPARTMENT OR EMBASSY OTTAWA HAVE HEARD
OF ANY CANADIAN OR US-CANADIAN INTEREST IN DEVELOPING THE
PETROLEUM RESERVES BELIEVED TO EXIST IN THE AREAS
MENTIONED ABOVE. MATLOCK

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